

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-7 and 9-11 are currently pending in the subject application. By this amendment, claim 1 is canceled without prejudice, the subject matter thereof having been incorporated into claims 5 and 10. Also by the instant amendment, claims 2-3, 7-9 and 11 are canceled, without prejudice, and claims 5 and 10 are amended to be in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. No new matter is added by the amendments to claims 5 and 10.

In the outstanding Office action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 7, 9 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent No. 60-164348 ("JP '348") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,307,145 to Kataoka et al. ("the Kataoka et al. reference") and in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,300,556 to Yamagashi et al. ("the Yamagashi et al. reference"). The Examiner objected to claims 5 and 10 as depending from a rejected base claim, and indicated that claim 6 is allowed.

Asserted Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-3, 7, 9 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). By the instant amendment, claims 1-3, 7, 9 and 11 are canceled, thereby rendering moot the rejection thereof.

Allowable Subject Matter

In the outstanding Office action, the Examiner objected to claims 5 and 10 as depending from a rejected base claim, but indicated that claims 5 and 10 would be allowable if rewritten to be in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By the instant amendment, claims 5 and 10 are amended to be in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Thus, claims 5 and 10 are believed to be in condition for allowance and a notice to such effect is respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowance of claim 6.

Conclusion

Since the cited prior art references neither anticipate nor render obvious claims 5, 6 and 10, it is submitted that these claims are in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes that additional discussions or information might advance the prosecution of the instant application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below to expedite resolution of any outstanding issues.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration of this application is earnestly solicited, and an early and favorable further action upon all pending claims is hereby requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment associated with this communication to Deposit Account No. 01-2300, referring to client-matter number **107336-00016**.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: June 8, 2004

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Enclosures Petition for Extension of Time (two months)
Associate Power of Attorney